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professional courses all students who are adequately equipped. Each case is considered on its merits, and if the applicant is admitted, he is not enrolled at the beginning as a candidate for a higher degree, but as a so-called "special student." If his work should prove equal in quantity and quality to the regular students, he can take the final examinations and get his degree.

The second problem is that of the student who wishes to carry on advanced work of a technical character, such as is more appropriately given and sought in a library school than in the graduate school of a university. Such courses are graduate courses, but they are professional rather than cultural. A student seeking advanced training may already have the degree of B.L.S.; or may be the graduate of a library school not conferring degrees; or may be a college graduate with library experience but without library school training; or may be an educated and experienced person without a degree of any kind.

There is at present no regularly organized graduate school to which such a student can go, but this is not from lack of desire on the part of faculties. The demand for advanced training is too slight to warrant the expenditures involved. Such demand as exists is too varied to fill; and students expect intensive training which is difficult in a one-year course. Until the means are provided the schools should throw open more widely their present facilities. If Yale admits students without degrees to its graduate school, the library schools can do the same. The so-called "open courses," to which experienced library workers are now admitted, should be greatly increased in number. The schools might also forestall demand by relieving their undergraduate seniors of some of the more formal courses required for graduation, allowing them instead to pursue some investigation of special interest. If such investigations can be carried on better in other libraries, the student should get leave of absence without loss of credit.

A NEW PLAN FOR TRAINING LIBRARY ASSISTANTS

By JULIA A. HOPKINS, *Supervisor of Staff Instruction, Public Library, Brooklyn, N. Y.*

Among the many wonderful developments in the field of library work during the last decade, none perhaps has been more rapid or more interesting than that of the training class conducted by the individual library for the enlargement and strengthening of its own staff.

In the early days every librarian learned his trade by working at it in the old style apprentice method; and this method was fairly satisfactory when libraries were small and the field of their work limited. But as they increased in size and in the number of their activities, demanding a proportionately larger force of workers, the time necessary to devote to the supervision of the work of beginners was too great; hence, as an economy of time and effort, the library began to admit new workers at stated times during the year, giving direction and supervision to the

group instead of to the individual; and so we have the so-called "apprentice class."

In these first apprentice classes, however, the old method of training through practical experience prevailed to a large extent; the class periods being limited almost entirely to description of routine methods, criticism of work done, and discussion of problems arising in the everyday work of the library.

With the tremendous growth of the great branch library systems in our large cities, a new phase developed. The amount of work to be handled in such systems demanded a larger number of trained assistants than could be obtained from the library schools. Moreover, the large increase in the number of small libraries (brought into existence through Mr. Carnegie's gifts of library buildings), and the rapid development of the various types of

special libraries, offered to graduates from library schools positions carrying executive and administrative duties, compared with which the position of under assistant in a branch system had little attraction. As a result, the large libraries, in order adequately to man their staffs, were forced to abandon the old plan of apprenticeship and to organize some form of definite library training.

These training classes, of which there are many today, vary greatly in size, entrance requirements, length of course, character of instruction, etc. In their simplest form we find them very slightly advanced beyond the apprentice type; in their most developed organization they in many respects approach quite closely the one-year library schools. Some of these latter classes are in charge of trained librarians who have had teaching experience in a library school.

The field of their usefulness and value of their service is unquestioned. It is doubtful if the great branch systems and the large public libraries could have become what they are without the assistance rendered by their training classes. While every such library needs and wants graduates from the library schools on its staff, yet undoubtedly the rank and file of the staff, in all grades of its service, will be made up of the graduates from its own training class.

The objective points of the two types of training will always differ. The training class trains its students for a particular library; the library school prepares its students for service in *any* library.

The importance of the work professionally has progressed to the point where, for the last few A. L. A. Conferences, the need of discussion of training class problems has been recognized as deserving a place on the program of this section. In addition, for the last two years training class instructors have been granted space on the program for a round table. They are taking steps to organize and to consider a possible standardization of courses.

However, standardization of training

class courses will be a much more difficult matter to effect than standardization of library school courses. As the objective point of each individual training class is the service of its own library, the needs of that library must determine its course of instruction. Not only does each separate training class differ from every other, but its own history would probably show many changes in the development of its course.

With the entry of our country into the war, two years ago, and the resulting conditions in the business world and in the government service, the training classes had not only to drop, for the time, all thought of standardization, but many of them had to throw over carefully built up courses and organize, on an entirely different basis, courses that would serve the immediate and pressing need.

The Brooklyn Public Library was one of these. Through various changes it had evolved a seven months' course of training which had for three years proved very satisfactory. Its classes averaged twenty in number and always had some students with college training or some other form of education higher than that of a high school. In the fall of 1917 the class number dropped to twelve; and in view of the great strain of the library's service and the increasing need for rapid replenishment of its diminishing force, it was decided materially to shorten the course, to graduate its students early, and to take on a new class in the spring.

Long before time for the spring class the situation had become so acute that the library decided to abandon entirely the course in *library training*, and to substitute for it a one month's *clerical* course, to which were added five months of probationary practice work in the branch libraries, the practice work being paid for. The announcement of this course brought a large and very satisfactory response; and the continued pressure on the staff made it necessary, two months later, to offer it again.

This same change to a clerical course was made in several other libraries; and

a comparison of the outlines of subjects they covered shows a close similarity. The course gave, in brief, a few lectures on library standards and business methods, some talks on the local library by heads of departments, a few lessons in filing, some problems on the use of the shelf list and the card catalog, and required the memorizing of the decimal classification and the book of rules for the staff, with some drill in routine work.

This course relieved the immediate situation; but it was a distinct menace for the future. It presupposed that its graduates would do only clerical work, and necessitated a sharp differentiation between the duties of the clerical workers and the library assistants. Moreover, if no means of promotion were provided, the clerical workers would soon leave the service for business positions with better pay; and that class of workers would have to be recruited so frequently that the energy of the training force of the library would be largely expended in that type of effort exhibited by a squirrel chasing its tail around the wheel of its cage.

In addition, if the clerical course were all the preparation given for entrance upon the library's service, that service would be slowly disorganized and disintegrated. In the organization of the staff the higher grades of service are administrative. These grades can be supplied from the library schools, from other libraries, or by promotions from the staff. The lowest grade requires only clerical efficiency, and can be well supplied by such a course of clerical training as we have been considering. But the intermediate grades, demanding professional knowledge and equipment, are the hardest to fill. As has been shown above, the type of work and the pay, in these grades, has little attraction today for the library school graduate. In very few instances would it attract assistants from other libraries. If therefore the library itself provides no means for feeding these intermediate grades from the grade below, an important link in the library's service is broken.

To remedy this defect and prevent its disastrous consequences one of two things could be done. The first method would provide for the promotion of the graduates from the clerical course, by organizing the library's service so as to offer successive grades of clerical work. Such opportunity for advancement would doubtless hold to the library many of the clerical workers; and thus do away with the expensive bookkeeping necessitated by many changes on a staff. In addition, a short entrance course in library training would have to be given, to prepare for the lower grades of the library's service such students as showed themselves capable of professional work. This method of handling the problem has, I believe, been tried by the Cleveland Public Library.

The other method would incorporate into the clerical course such elementary library training as would form a basis for professional work; and then build upon this a more advanced course, providing for promotion on the staff. This method is the one which the Brooklyn Public Library has tried to work out. It may interest you to know how we did it:

We first strengthened our entrance course, not by giving more time to it, but by changing the schedule. Instead of devoting the first month of the six to class instruction, we now give twenty-five days, scattered over five months—two days a week during the first month, and one day a week during the four months following. The sixth month is entirely given to practice work in the branch libraries.

This change of schedule enabled us to add several courses not possible under the former arrangement. With class recitations following each other every day, there was very little time for the student for preparation or reading, and almost no time for the instructor for revision. With the new plan we are able to give a course of over one hundred lectures, forty-two of which are devoted to classification, cataloging, and library economy (this last including most of the former clerical course), forty-seven to reference work, literature and bibliography; four to the history of books and libraries; and eleven to the study of the Brooklyn Public Library.

The literature courses are reading courses, and the students are provided

with lists of books from which they are required to read and report upon certain volumes during the course, and which they are advised to keep and use as suggestions for their reading after appointment on the staff.

The object of the course is not only to prepare the student for the clerical work of the first grade, but also to add to her knowledge of books, to foster and develop her love of reading, to arouse her interest in the library profession, and her desire to remain in it.

The course is given twice a year, the classes forming in October and in March. Upon it, as a foundation, was built an advanced course; and the two courses, taken together, will, we hope, give professional training comparable to that of a one-year library school course.

Library schools very generally group their courses under three heads: Technical, bibliographic, and administrative. This classification corresponds quite strikingly with the types of work required in the successive grades of the library's service, which demand proficiency (1) in technical matters, (2) in work with books and with the public, and (3) in administration.

Following a comparative and analytical study of the one-year courses, a course was mapped out which, in length and subjects covered, struck the average and, at the same time, tried to embody the best features of all. This course was then divided into two—an elementary and an advanced course.

Almost every subject taught in a library school has its elementary and its advanced phases. Every library school has to include both phases in its instruction. The Brooklyn Public Library includes both, but gives them in two sections instead of at the same time.

In the cataloging course, library hand, proper forms of cards, neatness of execution, accuracy in transcribing items, ability to follow a given code of rules in making the cards, are elementary phases of the subject.

In classification, the memorizing of the scheme, learning to relate subheads under different classes, use of the index, relation between the class number and the subject heading in the catalog, are elementary phases.

So, in reference work, are such matters as learning how to gather information from books, proper methods of investigating a subject and the study of a few of the most-used reference books. All such elementary phases of study can be assimilated by high school graduates.

The advanced phases of these subjects

involve more knowledge and information on the part of the student, a comparative study of books and methods, the training of the judgment in making decisions, and the exercise of the power of initiative.

Making a distinction between these two phases, we included the elementary treatment of subjects in our entrance course, as described above. The advanced phases were then provided for in a course of about two hundred and forty lectures—one hundred being given to the technical subjects, one hundred to bibliographic, and forty to administrative and miscellaneous subjects.

The two courses, elementary and advanced, taken together, make a complete whole; for completion of which the library will give a certificate. The entrance course counts a certain number of credits toward the certificate; upon the satisfactory completion of each subject in the advanced course the student will be given a pass-card stating the number of credits assigned to that subject; and upon completion of all the subjects, the certificate will be granted.

The assistant must attend the lectures and do the work of the course in her own free time; but there is no charge for the instruction. On the staff of the Brooklyn Public Library there are many—heads of departments and branch librarians—who are regular lecturers before library schools. The supervisor of staff instruction, who is in charge of the course, has been officially connected with three library schools. It therefore goes without saying that the instruction will reach the professional standard.

An assistant will be able to complete the advanced course in from two to four years, dependent upon her physical strength and her own desire.

The course is open to all assistants in the Brooklyn Public Library.

Assistants in the second grade (or higher grades) are eligible without an entrance examination. Every assistant in the second grade is either a graduate of a library school or has passed a promotion examination covering the same educational equipment.

Assistants in the first grade who are college graduates are also eligible without examination. Other first grade assistants have to pass an entrance test covering one year of college work.

The course was offered for the first time in October, 1918.

For the past five years we have been giving a special training course for children's librarians. This is a nine months' course, open to college graduates or to

those who have had some college work and pass the entrance examination. Twenty hours a week are given to class work, and an equal number of hours to practice work in the branch libraries, this practice work being paid for at the rate of one-half the salary of the second grade, to which the graduates from the course are eligible.

The instruction in children's literature and methods of work with children is given by Miss Clara W. Hunt, superintendent of work with children; and for instruction in other subjects the students join the classes in the advanced course.

This special course is also open to assistants on the staff of the library who can meet the entrance requirements. Pass-cards are given for the various subjects as they are completed, and a certificate at the end.

Another feature of the plan is that the pass-card in any subject will be accepted in place of a promotion examination in that subject.

For promotion from the first to the second grade, or from the second to the third grade, two examinations are required; one technical, the other educational and bibliographical.

If an assistant has successfully covered either the technical or the bibliographic work in the advanced course, she will be excused from taking that part of the promotion examination.

This adds to the attractiveness of the plan for the assistants, as many of them dread an examination coming "out of a clear sky," as it were, much more than they do one following a definite course of study under an instructor.

As you see, the plan is intended primarily to benefit the Brooklyn Public Library; and we hope that it will do this in several ways:

1. It will give those entering the system an incentive to work for promotion

right from the start. Too often, the new assistant, having finished her entrance course and gained appointment, feels that she has arrived, and settles back without realizing that she has really only begun her work. The opportunity offered in this plan will tend to correct this attitude. If she is really a librarian at heart and has normal strength, she will either (if she is eligible) enter the advanced course, or (not being eligible) take some cultural courses of study outside to prepare herself for entrance.

2. It prepares assistants for promotion steadily and systematically.

3. By its offer of instruction according to professional standards, it will tend to hold on the staff all those who are working for the certificate.

4. It offers to the assistant who wishes for more extended knowledge of a particular branch of library work an opportunity for further study.

5. Indirectly, the library's service cannot help but be freshened and strengthened, kept "toned up" as it were, by this steady application of many on its staff to the acquiring of professional knowledge and the study of library problems.

6. It may probably attract to the library some women who feel an interest in library work but who cannot afford to take the time and spend the money, even for a one-year course, at a library school, but who would be glad to take such a course if, at the same time, they could be earning money and covering their expenses. If this occurs, the advanced course will open another avenue of approach to the profession for those who otherwise would be excluded from it. If professional standards are maintained, the course will then benefit not only its own library but the profession at large, whose need of trained workers is so great.

A CLERICAL COURSE FOR LIBRARY ASSISTANTS

By BERTHA R. BARDEN, *Supervisor Apprentice Class, Public Library, Cleveland, Ohio*

Present conditions in library service are forcing more clearly upon us the distinction between library work which is purely clerical and that which is really professional in character. Necessity has shown that much of the routine work of the loan desks particularly, can be done by assistants with limited education and with no professional training, provided they are taught to do this special work. In a large library this

training can best be given in a class, where instruction can be systematic and uniform.

The object of this paper is to present the experience of the Cleveland Public Library in organizing the clerical course which has been given in addition to the regular apprentice course in the past two years.

Training in the apprentice classes in the Cleveland Public Library is given not as a preliminary to employment in the library,